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## BOOK REVIEWS.

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**SOCIAL LIFE OF VIRGINIA IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.** An Inquiry Into the Origin of the Higher Planting Class, Together with an Account of the Manners, Customs and Diversions of the People. By Philip Alexander Bruce, Late Corresponding Secretary of the Virginia Historical Society, and Author of the "Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century," [&c., &c]. First Edition Limited to One Thousand Copies. Printed for the Author by Whittet and Shepperson, Printers, Richmond, Va., 1907. Sold by the Bell Book and Stationery Company, Richmond, Va., pp. 268.

There can be no more instructive and useful, as well as delightful, form of history than that which treats of the character, manners, social conditions and usages of a people; but at the same time none so difficult to do successfully. Even in an old country like England, with its rich stores of records, history, biography, memoirs, diaries, and notes of the masters of literature, it is most difficult to catch and depict the spirit of a time long past. Here in Virginia of the Seventeenth century, with comparative scarcity of records, but few letters, diaries and similar material and with practically no native literature, we have a far more difficult, if much less complex task.

To be properly equipped to write the ideal social history of Colonial Virginia the author should have a profound knowledge of similar English history during the latter part of the Sixteenth and the Seventeenth centuries; he should have before him the results of long study of English public records, of wills, parish registers, local history, and the thousand and one sources which may throw light on the history of the English people. He must also know Virginia and Virginia history and records in the most complete way. Such an ideal equipment will not be claimed for any one now working in the field. Many sources, such as English wills, family records, &c., as far as they relate to Virginia, have hardly been touched.

Mr. Bruce is well read in English history and is far better qualified than any man now living to supply everything which the Virginia records and those in the English Public Record Office relating to Virginia can furnish. He has made a most attractive and valuable book, even if some of his readers may deem that, at times, he has idealized, and that, admitting all of his statements in regard to individual emigrants to be correct (which they almost always are), they may believe that there are not enough instances adduced to justify a general rule. This division of the subject will be referred to again.

In his chapters on "Size of Population," "Ties With the Mother Country," "Manner of Life," "Hospitality of the People," "Drinking and Dancing," "Acting and Games," "Horse-Racing," "Hunting and Fishing," "The Funeral," "The Wedding," "Church, Court Day and Muster," and "Duelling," the author has after the manner so well known in his former monumental work, supplied a wealth of new material, gathered chiefly from the county records, which will be read with the greatest interest.

The second chapter, on influences promoting English emigration, is in the main sound in argument; but some exceptions may be taken. Emigration is chiefly on account of one of four causes: Inconveniences and dangers caused by war, such as the emigration of the defeated loyalists, during the English civil wars; love of adventure; the hope of bettering one's condition, or being sent by family or friends that the emigrant may be redeemed from bad habits, or may cease to be an annoyance to people at home.

With the exception of the first, all of these causes are in effect at the present time, as they were in the Seventeenth century, and we can get some idea of the character of English emigrants then, by those we know now.

Any one who is at all acquainted with such emigrants, knows that the Englishman of pluck and energy who comes to America or goes to a colony, troubles his head but little about *gentlemanly* employment. He takes that in which he thinks he can succeed best in making a good living. And he thinks still less about ancestry and family. To the English gentleman, as to the old type of Virginian of the Nineteenth century, these things are matters of course.

It does not seem a very probable conjecture (p. 33) that an English gentleman who was considering establishing his son in Virginia, knew or thought much about the social advantages he might have by mingling with people of his own class in the colony. Nor is it likely that the London merchant had (p. 37) increased social consequence in view when he sent a son to settle on a plantation in Virginia. It was a good thing to have a member of the family on the spot to look after the tobacco business, as well as make additional money by growing it himself.

The four chapters on the origin of the higher planting class will probably attract the general reader—especially if he has the prevailing interest in genealogy—more than any in the book. They are crowded with instances, derived from many sources, of members of the gentry and of the mercantile class who came to Virginia.

There are perhaps too many cases in which "probably" or "supposed" occur. In each case there are good grounds for such probability or supposition; but all students of family history know too well the

vagaries and uncertainties of pedigree hunting to be willing to accept anything but positive proof as evidence.

Have we enough evidence in regard to a sufficient number of individuals to make positive assertions as to the origin of the higher planting class in Virginia? While there is of course abundant evidence that many gentlemen of good families settled here, and also in regard to many sons and other kinsmen of merchants, there is not yet in hand (though it is constantly growing in quantity) enough evidence to authorize positive assertions as to a whole class. Tens of thousands have been spent in family investigation in New England, where one dollar has been spent in Virginia.

An approximation can now, however, be made. The larger landholders, the men who ruled the assemblies, the county courts, and the parishes, seem to have been in the main, with the element of the peerage and, to a large extent, representatives of great county families, absent, much the same as in England.

There were a few, very few, of noble birth, like the Wests, a considerable representation of families of prominence in English counties or of some place in history like the Mallorys, Littletons, Digges' and Wyatts; a very much larger number from the minor gentry and the merchants, some from clergymen, physicians, sea captains, &c., perhaps a good many of yeomen descent, and a few families which had risen from industrious indentured servants.

The story of descent from convicts is a silly fable. Those best acquainted with Virginia records and genealogy have never found a family of such descent.

It should be borne in mind in this connection that the word "gentry" has a wide scope which the author hardly seems to be aware of. There was a great difference in manners, education, and habits between the member of the minor gentry, not differing much, except in family pride and a coat of arms, from the well-to-do yeoman, and the representative of the great county family, who was a member of Parliament controlled two or three other seats and was well known at court. At the same time the little "squireen" might very probably have been of much older stock than his more prosperous countryman, whose family had risen on the spoils of churches and monasteries at the Reformation.

No better founders could be desired for a nation than such a combination of classes as has been described.

As more early records come to light and as more English wills and other documents giving material for family history are examined, it is believed that the view which has just been taken of what constituted the higher planting class (and which is really in the end the same as Mr. Bruce's) will be confirmed. At present as has been said, the evidence is not sufficiently complete.

Some estimates may be made, which may perhaps be thought more curious than convincing, but which will at least give some idea of what we, at present, really know.

The councillors of state were always appointed from among the men of the highest social standing and greatest estates. Up to 1700 there were 169 members of this body. In giving an account of their respective social affiliations, only those have been included where the facts are positively known. Of the Council, 64 were certainly from gentle families, and 18 from the merchant class. Thus 87 are left whose origin is unknown. In this "unknown" class have been included at least 17 who are known to have used arms. Others of them may have done so, but the records relating to them are not to be found. Among these unknown, too, are men who from their arrival in the colony held good social position, such as Richard Johnson, Henry Hartwell, the Warners, the Lees, Hills, and Carters, John Lear, Thomas Pettus, William Cole, Richard Townshend, Joseph Bridger, James Bray, Major General Robert Smith, Thomas Beale, John Utie, Thomas Swan, the Custis family, Obedience Robins, John Cheesman, and others of equal note. There can be but little doubt that these men came from respectable families of gentry or merchants, but we have not the positive proof.

In regard to the origin of the members of the House of Burgesses, much less is known. In a published list (necessarily incomplete) appear 1274 names before 1700. Of course very many of these are duplications, but that does not affect the calculation. Of these the English origin of only about ten per cent. is positively known. Eight per cent. of the Burgesses are known to have been of gentle descent.

One more estimate will be made. In Waters' Gleanings and those of Withington appear 247 wills mentioning persons as residing in Virginia. Of these there are 75 of families of gentlemen, 65 merchants, 18 clergymen and physicians, 4 yeomen, 42 mechanics and minor tradesmen, and 4 servants, leaving 39 unknown. Of the English residences which can be determined, there were 95 from London, and 86 from other English counties and towns. London's very large contribution to the population of Virginia was continued through the Colonial period, and, if the habits and modes of thought of the country gentry had a great influence in forming Virginia, those of the Londoners must have played a great part also.

There is one instance in which this influence may have been felt. In large cities, especially at that time, there was more general intelligence and more information than in remote parts of the country. Superstition, too, is not a plant of such luxurious growth in cities as in remote neighborhoods. During the seventeenth century, when England was executing hundreds of witches, and when Massachusetts put

twenty-eight to death, it is Virginia's happy history not to have had a single instance of death for witchcraft, and only two or three whippings. Is it not possible that the sober, good sense, the broader view and the intelligence of the man from the great city may have had much to do with Virginia's freedom from this ancient delusion?

This is too good a book to have been furnished with only an index of surnames.

THE GERMAN ELEMENT IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY OF VIRGINIA.  
By John Walter Wayland, B. A., Ph. D., Assistant and Fellow in History, University of Virginia, Member of the Virginia Historical Society, the Southern Historical Association, and the Pennsylvania German Society. This monograph has been accepted by the Faculty of the University of Virginia as satisfying the requirements in original research for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Published by the Author. The Michie Company, Printers, Charlottesville, Va., 1907, pp. VII., 272.

The author, who has distinguished himself at the University of Virginia, and whom it is a pleasure to claim as a member of this Society, is of German descent and a native of the Valley of Virginia. Especially fond of historical studies, his attention has naturally been called to that of his own people, which has been so little understood and of which so little has been written..

One of the first fruits of the wise and generous establishment by the Virginia Society of Colonial Dames of an annual prize for work in Virginia history at the University, was an essay on the Germans of the Valley, by Mr. Wayland, which was published in this Magazine in 1902. The present work, while confessedly only a monograph, is a long step towards a full and detailed history of the Germans of Virginia and the settlement of the Valley. The majority of the first permanent settlers in Virginia west of the Blue Ridge were Germans, preceding the Scotch-Irish of Augusta in point of time, and they have to the present day constituted a large and important element in the population of that section. In some of the counties along the Shenandoah, the Germans have considerably exceeded the people descended from other nationalities.

That the history of the Virginia Germans has been neglected, and their important place in the record of the colony and State overlooked, is due to various causes, largely, it should be said frankly, to the indifference of the Germans themselves.

Of course the difference in language from the English speaking population about them, and their almost entire devotion to agricultural pursuits, helped in preventing their receiving the attention that their